

VZCZCXRO1996  
PP RUEHBZ RUEHGI  
DE RUEHGI #0054/01 0551243  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P R 241243Z FEB 10  
FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1184  
INFO RHMFISS/AFRICOM  
RUEHBZ/AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE 0284  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0394  
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0407  
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 0306  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0247  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0220  
RUEHNJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA 0598  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0592  
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA 0012  
RUEHNJ/USDAO NDJAMENA CD  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0215  
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0013  
RUEHGI/AMEMBASSY BANGUI 1496

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BANGUI 000054

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/C  
USUN FOR DMUERS  
PARIS FOR RKANEDA  
LONDON FOR PLORD  
NAIROBI FOR AKARAS  
AFRICOM FOR JKUGEL  
INR FOR JPEKKINEN  
DRL FOR SCRAMPTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [CT](#)

SUBJECT: CAR: ELECTIONS DELAYS THREATEN CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER, MAY  
FORCE CONSENSUS WITH OPPOSITION.

REF: A. A: BANGUI 41

[1](#)B. B: BANGUI 42 AND PREVIOUS.

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Central African constitutional and electoral law stipulates that elections must occur 105 days before the end of the government's mandate, with the Council of Ministers announcing elections at least 60 days before the planned date. Although the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) issued a calendar indicating April 18 as the date of the elections, the Council failed to announce a date. Although February 26 is the last possible date the government can call for elections in order to avoid running afoul of constitutional stipulations, many experts believe that the government cannot announce elections in the near term due to technical and funding shortfalls, as well as continued controversy swirling around the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process (Ref A). While most observers suspect that the involved actors will negotiate around the Constitution's demands, the international community faces the awkward choice of insisting on flawed but timely elections or accepting a delay in hopes of ensuring a more inclusive and transparent process. END SUMMARY.

-----  
ELECTION'S LEGAL WINDOW CLOSING  
-----

[1](#)2. (U) According to the Central African Constitution and Electoral Code, presidential and legislative elections must transpire 45 days before the end of the mandate. With the current presidential and legislative mandate ending June 11, elections should take place by April 26. Concurrently, the Electoral Code stipulates that the government must announce elections 60 days before the date of the vote - meaning that

government must announce elections by February 26 to maintain the integrity of the electoral process.

-----  
TOO MANY OBSTACLES REMAIN FOR TIMELY ELECTIONS  
-----

13. (SBU) The European Commission (EC) recently secured an extra 2.5 million Euros for the UNDP elections basket fund, bringing their total to 6.5 million Euros (8.5 million USD). However, observer predictions that the costs of the elections are now likely to exceed 21 million USD temper this good news. This is an increase of over 5 million USD from original UNDP estimates (Ref A), and no other countries or institutions plan further contributions as of this report. Furthermore, the UNDP, charged with helping the CARG and IEC to organize the elections, continues to suffer from staffing and financial shortfalls. They have yet to complete the paperwork needed for the EC to make their contribution to the basket fund and they have only hired two of twelve proposed electoral experts.

14. (SBU) As reported in Ref A, the Independent Electoral Commission is moribund pending a presidential decree that will formalize its new members. Though this should happen within the week, the planned audit of the IEC President's finances continues to await assignment to an auditor. The opposition accepted the government's demand to choose the auditor, but only under jointly negotiated terms of reference. It is clear they still hope to unearth mismanagement by the President and call for his replacement.

15. (SBU) The electoral census is sure to pose another stumbling block: The President of the IEC seeks a simple update of the

BANGUI 00000054 002 OF 003

electoral lists of 2005 as a way to reduce the burdens on the IEC's preparations for the vote, but the opposition is concerned that creating electoral lists ``on the cheap'' when much of the population in the North has been displaced will disenfranchise many potential voters and seeks a new census in the name of transparency. (Note: The IEC President is mindful of the fact that the Ministry of the Interior would approve updated electoral lists, but the full IEC would need to approve new lists. End Note.) The UN estimates that 300,000 Central Africans are currently displaced or seeking refuge in neighboring countries as a result of war and forced displacement since the last election. This problem is particularly acute in the opposition's stronghold in the northwest. A full census would ensure that more of the affected parties could vote, but the investment in time would dampen any chances of a timely election.

16. (SBU) The stalled DDR also raises questions about the safety and security of any possible election (Ref A). All agree that elections without the DDR will be extremely difficult. Yet in a recent speech, President Bozize blamed DDR implementation delays on the president of the Army for the Restitution of Democracy (APRD) militia, Jean Jacques Demafouth and his own Minister of Communication, Cyriaque Gonda. Ignoring the mistrust that many in the militia have for his administration, he claims their leaders stole large quantities of money meant for the militia members and that they are to blame for the lack of progress in the DDR. Bozize went on to say he will ``point a knife'' at those that threatened him and that he will ``skin trouble makers''.

17. (SBU) The Mediator of the Republic, who played a key role in finding a solution to the IEC's impasse, suggested to the CDA in a recent meeting that the President does not understand that his aggressive posturing will slow the DDR. Post suspects that Bozize's intimate familiarity with coups and political violence leaves him consistently nervous that others seek to unseat him. He said as much to the Mediator when he spoke of fears that the militia men will simply use the money they receive to buy weapons to attack him (NOTE: This would be difficult as the militia members are set to receive just USD 130 for three months

worth of food while they await demobilization. END  
NOTE.).Therefore, the seeming contradiction of wanting  
elections, but not taking the necessary steps to implement DDR  
suggests he fears that a peaceable northwest poses not only an  
electoral, but also physical, threat to him. Unfortunately, few  
others believe legitimate elections are possible without the  
increased peace and stability promised by the DDR.

-----  
DELAYS IMPOSE DIFFICULT CHOICES  
-----

18. (SBU) COMMENT: Most observers continue to agree that  
President Bozize wants elections, which are vital to maintaining  
his legitimacy. However, the opposition persists in their  
spoiler tactics, hoping for greater leverage in negotiations to  
solve the impending crisis. The delayed elections threaten the  
integrity of the constitution, but the conventional wisdom is  
that if the President and opposition can reach an agreement over  
the timing and implementation of the elections, the National  
Assembly will find a way to extend the current mandate and avoid  
a legal crisis. Most observers in the international community  
are ready to accept such a compromise provided the parties reach  
a consensus and the elections occur this year.

BANGUI 00000054 003 OF 003

19. (SBU) The lack of voter lists, local electoral commissions,  
trained elections workers and materials, and a lack of funding  
all suggest a mere two to three week delay will not suffice.  
This pushes the electoral calendar up against the rains, which  
usually stretch from May to October, and bring the country to a  
standstill. If the census work commences before the rains and  
the sides strike a political deal, the elections date may be  
pushed back as late as November or December 2010. END COMMENT.  
SMITH